753 /66/ This is because illness is usually attributed to an evil spirit,
761 which must not be irked with complaints. Yet in everyday language it is God who is the cause of everything, of health as well as of death. The sorcerers consulted indicate which spirit must be appeased, to whom sacrifices must be offered; or they state quite frankly that the hour of the sick person has come, that his life is over and he is about to rejoin his ancestors, for it is often the latter who call him and come to fetch him. In the case of old men and especially of old women, death is considered a natural event. An old man has many children who will give him a fine funeral, and it is time for him to make way for his eldest son. If a quarrelsome person falls sick, his
[763] illness is often attributed to an evil spell cast by an enemy. When an elder is about to die, those who have caused him offense come to beg his forgiveness and only find peace when they have obtained it, for the old man might return to obtain his revenge. Sudden death is usually ascribed to poison and, alas, this is often the case. Sometimes it is also attributed to an evil spirit, especially in case of accident, fall, snake bite, etc.

755 The instinct of self-preservation is so strong in man that the Mossi
757 although they ascribe a superhuman origin to illness, nevertheless fight it. It is true that all their treatments combine medicinal and superstitious elements to drive off evil spirits, and whatever the remedy, true medicine or amulet, it is always a tim; there is only the one
759 word to designate it. Some of the natives know how to treat certain illnesses, and people come to consult them, often from far away. One has a medicine against snakes, and he makes it in complete secrecy on a certain day; one knows how to treat colds and bronchitis;
[752] another, dysentery; yet another, sores. The bone-setters are often very skillful, and with the mere pressure of their fingers they can set a dislocated joint or a broken leg; then they enclose it between tightly-bound millet stalks as a splint. These doctors prescribe remedies without resorting to sacrifices or witchcraft. Sometimes they live with their patient to care for him, of course for a fee, especially if the person gets well.

751 Smallpox vaccination is performed, but often too late, on individuals who already have the germ. The vaccine is taken from a seriously ill person without any precautionary antiseptic measures. The vaccinated individual is usually made very sick and sometimes dies of

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible.
757 They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

755 must be procured. The leaf used to cover a wound must be held by means of a thin cotton cord with cowries attached at the end, three cowries for a boy, four for a girl. A hemp cord with three or four knots, worn around the neck, wrist, or any other part of the body, prevents swelling of that part and is also a master remedy against hair worms. Sometimes it is not so easy to secure the prescribed amulet, for instance, if it is the beak or claw of a hawk, a deer horn, or certain parts of a buffalo or koba. The poor Mossi goes to great pains to find this indispensable amulet.

763 Do as he may, sooner or later he must die. When an old man feels that his end is near, he calls his family and gives them his last instructions. He talks to his eldest son and tells him where his cattle and caches are to be found, who are his debtors and creditors. Sometimes death comes swiftly without warning, and the old man has no time to talk to his heir; a large part of the fortune is thus lost, because a Mossi in good health never tells anybody, especially not his /68/ children, where his property is, and those to whom he has entrusted it do not return it. Some Peul have made rather nice profits in this fashion.

761 754 The death of a young man or woman or more especially that of a small child is usually ascribed to an old woman who is said to have eaten the child's soul, and some old women claim to have this secret. [683] The sorcerer points out the guilty woman who is seized and put to death. Every sudden or accidental death is ascribed to an evil spirit, and the funeral ceremonies reflect this.

762 Suicide is extremely rare, but it does occur. Here is one case where we knew the participants. A man quarreled with his wife. The wife, who was stronger than her husband, overwhelmed him in the fight, and the neighbors openly ridiculed him. The following [766] day the husband was found hanging in his hut. A pit was hastily dug in his nearest field, and he was tossed into it naked without further ceremony. Suicide is regarded as a criminal act, and even the corpse is punished for it.

763 Like all human beings, the Mossi fear death. No longer to eat millet mush or to drink dolo seems to them the greatest of misfortunes. Still, when a Mossi sees death approaching, he resigns himself to it and accepts it stoically. He rests his head on the lap of his first wife, and his other wives gather around him. His friends and the village elders sit before the soukala, and all wait silently for hours until the

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the
[577] goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

782 539 no'pelra t'eb kis'tangandé t'a déé n'di né teng'kikirsi lé teng'portapa.

bird, a white rooster, and to offer it to the tangandé, so that he may take it and it with the kikirsi of the village and their wives.

782 539 755 This formula may vary with the circumstances. This is when the sacrificer sets forth his wishes. He tells the tangandé, for instance, that his son is ill and that he has consulted the sorcerer, who has told him to take a white rooster and offer it to the tangandé with water, so that the tangandé may restore his son's health. Then he pours the water behind his back, toward the east, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a ybou kom! God-king, receive the water of your rising!

Then he pours water before him, to the west, and says:

Na-wendé, déé a kyenbo kom! God-king, receive the water of your setting!

Finally he pours water on the sacrificial stone or before his feet, saying:

Tangandé, yk'n'déé kom nyou la kwen la biga lafi! Tangandé, arise, receive the water and drink it, and grant health to my son!

Nyé lé zouanga, nini ka yé. He is like a blind man, he no longer has eyes.

Tangandé nyé youngo né wintoro la ko biga lafi. The tangandé, he sees night and day and grants health to my child.

If the sacrifice includes an offering of millet beer, he pours some on the sacrificial stone, saying:

Na-Wendé ka nyou dam yé, la porédimma nyouda. God-king does not drink beer, but those of his retinue do.

Then he seizes the rooster with his left hand, bends its head back by pulling the comb, and slits its throat. He allows the blood to flow upon the stone where the water was poured, while saying:

Tangandé déé noara n'di, la kwen la biga lafi né sounoro! Tangandé, receive this rooster and eat it, and grant my child health and joy!

Then he tosses the rooster before him, saying:

Noara bé Wennam, ba souk' ba'a. This rooster is for God; may He dispell the illness.

Then he sends his child to get the rooster. The boy grasps the bird when it is lying on its back and if necessary helps it to achieve this

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position. /92/ He drags it along the ground by the feet to the sacrificer, who says:

T'a vouda bemdaoge. Drag me enemies along the ground.

The sacrificer then seizes the chicken and sets it upon its feet, holding its head straight:

T'a timma biga! May He grant health to my child!

He turns the rooster around, with its head down and its legs up in the air:

T'a terlda bema! May He cause my enemies to bite the dust!

With his left hand he tears feathers from the neck, spits on them, and glues them to the stone or to the ground with the victims's blood, saying:

Yelbandé tou sébro! May all that is evil go with the wind!

Ta toubré oum! May his /my enemy's/ ears catch (my curses)!

Ta nif ka nya yé! May he /my enemy's/ eyes go blind!

He breaks one of the chicken's legs:

T'a kao bemdaogo karga! Break the leg of my male enemies!

He breaks the other leg:

T'a kao bempoko karga! Break the leg of my female enemies!

He returns the bird to the child, who carries it away. The remaining water and beer are poured on the very spot of the sacrifice.

The rooster is plucked there or at home and roasted or cooked in water according to the sacrifice. The sacrificer removes the claws, beak, pinions, and liver, and he places them in the left hand of his child who lays them by the path some distance away, saying:

Mand'déé gobra, la kwen détogo nyé masem. The sacrifice is received with the left hand, but grant him health with the right hand.

He returns to the place where the people are gathered, and the victim is shared among all present. When all have eaten, they gather in a group before the sacrificer and greet him as follows:

Wennam déé mando! May God receive /Tr., the Mossi word means "eat"/ your sacrifice!

Wennam tou taoré! May God accept it!

The sacrifice is over.

782 If a goat, sheep, or beef was sacrificed, the hair on top of the
755 head is pulled out instead of neck feathers, and a piece of the rope used to tie the victim is added. All of this is glued where the blood was shed, and the victim's legs are not broken.

Such is the usual sacrificial formula. Variations are of course introduced by individuals and by the customs of particular regions. This is the mand'zallé.

/93/ The mand'lingdem or mand'dédem, which we might call "hidden sacrifice," is offered for the sake of someone who is ill and on the point of death. His illness is due to the fact that the soul has left his body. The sorcerer has said that it is to be found in the tangandé. Without the sick person's knowledge, hence the name "hidden sacrifice," his father goes to the tangandé, accompanied by another of his children who bears the victim and some water and by the sick person's mother who bears a large gourd half filled with water and a smaller gourd inside it.

The sacrifice is offered as previously described, but while the child is roasting the chicken, the sacrificer tosses onto the ground three cowries in the case of a sick boy, four in the case of a girl, and pours a little water. Then he invokes the sick child by name:
[801] "Bila, come, answer me." He calls three times for a boy, four times for a girl. He then takes the cowries and some of the soil which was soaked with water and the animal's blood. The woman lifts the small gourd which floats in the water, the sacrificer places the mud and cowries at the bottom of the large container, and the woman quickly covers the mixture with the small gourd which she holds down in the water. This procedure is repeated three or four times according to the patient's sex. The woman then heads toward home, holding the container in one hand and still bearing down on the small gourd to prevent it from floating. The sacrificer follows her, waving his sword or spear behind her to ward off the evil spirits. The soul is at the bottom of the water, amid the bloody mud and cowries, and they must do their utmost to prevent it from running away again.

When the procession reaches the patient, he is made to sit up, and the woman pours the water of the large gourd on his head, without lifting the smaller gourd. If the sick person, surprised by this sudden shower, gives a start, it means that he is saved; his soul has re-entered his body. Otherwise, nothing can be done, and the unfortunate person is abandoned to his fate; the tangandé did not want to return the soul.

782 755 Then the sacrificer and his assistants eat the victim, but the patient does not partake of it.

782 751 [753] The silent sacrifice, mand'moukou—also called "egg sacrifice," mand'gellé, because an egg is offered—is made in the following circumstances. Some diseases have the dismal faculty of talking like people. They call someone, who answers to his name thinking that a human being has called him. This is sufficient, he will fall ill and die.

The sorcerer decrees that such a disease threatens the village, and that a silent sacrifice is in order. The naba and the elders anxiously delegate one of the men among them to offer the sacrifice. On the following day in the morning, the appointed elder takes an egg, often also a kola nut and special roots, and follows the path which the disease would take if it came to the village. He walks in complete silence. When he reaches a certain point, he brings the egg close to his lips and tells it secretly that a disease threatens the village, and that if the disease tries to follow this path, the egg must stop it. Then he places the egg, kola nut, and roots upon the ground or buries them and retraces his steps. /94/ The egg, a chicken-to-be that cannot yet talk, is chosen as a symbol of the silence that must be observed to ward off the disease.

In the procedure called "bad sacrifice," the victim is not eaten by those present but left on the spot, where it rots or is eaten by vultures and hyenas. Any animal may be offered in this fashion, but the sorcerer alone may decide when the sacrifice is called for. It is usually performed to avert a general misfortune, for example, to ward off a contagious disease that will devour the animal and leave the people alone. The victim is sometimes abandoned alive and driven into the bush.

782 Anything may be offered in sacrifice if the sorcerer says so: kola nuts, cowries, the ashes of certain barks or roots, red stones, the inner fruit of the karite tree, etc. Chickens are the victims most commonly chosen, but sacrifices of goats and sheep are not uncommon. We have already mentioned the guinea hen as the sacrifice preferred by the kikirsi. The nabas are sometimes required to sacrifice cows or donkeys in certain cases. Some nabas, but not all, may sacrifice horses. Finally, even men were sacrificed in the old days. Certain tangamma [563] were greedy for human sacrifices, and the Peul were often used for this purpose. Natives with light skins tending to red, thus closer to [826] the color of ancestral spirits which are said to be white, were sacrificed to these spirits in preference to any others.

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782 to these spirits in preference to any others. These sacrifices were rare, and they were the sole prerogative of the highest chiefs.

Sometimes a vow is made instead of an immediate sacrifice. This is the poulongo mando. For example, a disease rages in the country, or someone has a serious undertaking at hand and wonders how it will turn out, or he wishes to dispose of an enemy. The person who makes the vow goes to the tangandé or to the kikirsi stone, carrying a gourd of water. He pours the water, saying, "Tangandé, if this illness departs, or if my understanding succeeds, or if my enemy dies, I will sacrifice to you a goat or a beef." To prove his good intentions, he buys the promised goat or cow at the first opportunity. If the tangandé or kikirsi grants his request, he fulfills his vow; in the sacrificial formula, instead of saying that the sorcerer told him to offer a certain victim, he mentions his vow and often promises another sacrifice on the following year.

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782 The Moslems have invented another bloodless sacrifice for their own benefit. Here is the recipe: "If someone is ill in your soukala, 755 take a kola nut, honey, honey cakes, beans, maize, and cowries and mix them all in a gourd filled with water. Then call in a Yarga or Peul Moslem to say a prayer. Of course, this man will only make the trip /95/ for a fee. A sheep at least must accompany the request." Grave, stately, and guarded as all good Moslems are supposed to be, the man sits down in the inner courtyard near the hut where the sick person lies, and the people sit around him, both hands open before their eyes, like a book, with their little fingers joined. The Moslem begins his prayer in Mossi, repeating the request that was made to him, that the patient should get well. When he is finished, he moves both hands across his face, three times for a boy, four times for a girl. Then the people go back to their former position, and the man utters some gibberish in Arabic or Peul. When he is through, all the people move their hands repeatedly across their faces; the head of the household dips his hand in the gourd which contains the mixture described above and puts it to his forehead; the children carry everything away; and everyone greets the sanctimonious rascal with the words: "May God grant your prayer!" Then the man sets out for home with the same gravity as before. The water will be used to wash the patient, and some of it will also be added to his food. None of this is very alarming, and if some patients get well through auto-suggestion, all the better.

789 Blessings and curses are also used. Should they be classed with the cult, or with magic? One way or the other, there are natives who have the power to kill anyone merely by saying a word. They can make the harvest wither, the cattle sicken. There are also some who can bless, make a trip propitious, an undertaking successful. If you 752 are wounded, go to them. They will put around the wounded part of ●755 your body a greasy rope with three or four knots according to your sex; 801 there will be no swelling, and the wound will heal quickly.

782 Such are the major sacrifices and the practices of the cult. The 769 sacrifices offered to the spirits of the dead on the day of burial or on 796 the day of kouré have not been mentioned, because the animals offered are not properly speaking sacrificed (kou mando) but offered, presented, fabré. We shall now mention the sacrifices made on the Day of the Dead.

The Koupéla Mossi have two major feast days: the Day of the Dead or basra, and the Moslem sheep celebration called kibsa. Both are intimate family affairs.

Basra is the feast of the dead. On that day every family head must offer sacrifices to his ancestral spirits, and he alone may sacrifice upon the grave. Even if a member of the family has become powerful and wealthy, he will not offer the sacrifice which devolves by right to the family head. All members of the family who wish to offer a sacrifice on the ancestral grave must, therefore, go to their elder on that day. Anyone may sacrifice to the kikirsi and tangandé, and almost everyone does at this time. It is mainly on this occasion that little children may be seen gravely sacrificing their chicken to their kikirsi and to the tangandé; each makes it a point of honor to offer his own animal. Only chickens are sacrificed on that day.

Basra is not celebrated by every family on the same day. Some celebrate it before the province chief does, others after him, while most families do it on the same day he does.

/96/ The naba of Koupéla proceeds as described below, and the ceremonies are the same for his subjects with the sole difference that being less wealthy they cannot offer as many sacrifices. The basra is always celebrated by the naba on a Saturday. Already on Thursday he has taken non-fermented beer from the vats and poured it on the graves of his father and grandfather. He has also sacrificed a chicken on each of the tombs. Wherever an ancestor of the naba is buried, the guardian of the grave sacrifices a chicken. This is repeated on

302 husband by legacy; while men are shaved only when they receive their first wife, because then they become masters of a hut, but they are not shaved when they get new wives because their status does not change again. A man who is appointed naba must lose his hair which was that of a subject and no longer suitable to a chief. A dead person [764] may only be buried without being shaved if he died an accidental death, etc.

789 The cross also plays a role which must not be overrated, but which is nevertheless real. The hilts of swords bear the shape of a cross; the feet, hands, and chest of the sick are often anointed with charcoal mixed in fat, always in the shape of a cross. The chests and backs of soukala dwellers are also marked with crosses to protect them against lightning. The huts are marked likewise, and crosses are drawn even inside the mouths of horses and donkeys. A cross is also drawn on the hut door of those who are seriously ill so as to ward off evil spirits. A cross of ashes on the chest and back is part of the mourning costume.

What is the origin of this custom? The natives cannot say, and invariably reply, "This is what our fathers did."

In addition to these superstitious practices that do not commit one to anything and that harm no one, there are others which can be very useful to /101/ those who practice them, and others yet which seem indeed to fall into the category of magic. We are referring to what the natives designate by the generic name of tim, without differentiating between true remedies of medicinal origin and superstitions or evil spells which should be characterized as magic. Indeed, it is often quite difficult to distinguish between the two.

755 Amulets and charms are tim to the natives, and so are the medicines which their specialists prescribe and which seem to have real effectiveness. We mentioned them briefly when we spoke of illness. We did not say that the preparation of these medicines rarely goes unaccompanied by some sorcery, and that the person who has been cured by a remedy must at least keep some in a little bag and sacrifice a chicken to it every year. Everything is done as in the usual sacrifices, but the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "God-tim, stretch out your hand and take this chicken. God has given me a powerful medicine. May this medicine protect me night and day, in the middle of the night and on the path, where we amuse ourselves and in the huts. Keep the jaws of the snake shut so that next year I may still be in good health, so that no misfortune may come to me,

755 so that my heart may rejoice unceasingly. Then I will come back with another chicken, so that you too may rejoice and continue to protect my wives and my children." Then the sacrifice is concluded. This formula does indicate that the power of the medicine is wholly ascribed to God.

751 Certain superstitious practices that belong in the tim category are used in special cases. For the sake of curiosity, here is what is done when a man has killed a hyena and to protect the huts against lightning.

[82] If a man kills a hyena, he must hastily consult some other native who previously has killed one, or he will become raving mad. The hunter goes to such a man who knows a remedy against this raving madness and takes him a chicken. The man indicates which roots must be obtained, and the hunter gathers them in the bush. He cuts them to pieces and brings them to his doctor who seizes a jar, grabs the chicken, and pulls it toward the roots, then says while pouring water into the ar: "God-tim and his kikiriga, arise, stretch out your hand, and take this water to drink it; take this chicken to eat it, and grant the man who has killed a hyena not to become raving mad." He sacrifices the chicken and pours the blood into the pot. Then he puts half of the roots into the jar and reduces the other half to ashes.

The hunter takes the whole thing home, and for seven days he puts water from the medicine into his millet mush and ashes from the roots into his sauce.

On the seventh day all the family members get together and come with their friends to greet the hunter. They all toss cowries into the gourd which contains the medicine, then proceed to market with much ceremony. The hunter fastens the head of the hyena to the end of a staff and bears it triumphantly to market. He has /102/ the right to take pistachios, beans, millet, cakes, etc., free of charge, anything he wishes. When he is finished taking things, stealing like a hyena, the procession falls into line once more and proceeds to a thick tree near the market. There, the hunter drives his staff into the ground, and everybody starts dancing around him; then they take small sticks and strike him, and he hastily runs away. He is now sure that he will not become raving mad, and what is more from now on he may kill as many hyenas as he wishes without fear.

771 their traditional fear. Nevertheless, Captain Lambert says that
648 prior to the French occupation, Moslems were forbidden by the
698 Moro Naba to /585/ say their prayers (kella) publicly. They merely recited their rosary (séki) silently.

797 Since the French occupation, the Mossi have lost all their prejudices against Islam, because they have been conquered by a different foe. In addition the Moslems tell them, as they do everywhere else in West Africa, that the Whites will only be vanquished and will only leave the country when everyone has become a Moslem. This leads the Mossi to start salaaming, and actually it is probable that there have been more conversions to Islam among the Mossi since our occupation than prior to it. This result, which may appear strange at first, is indubitable. Actually these conversions, although more numerous than they used to be, are still rare if we consider that the enormous majority of the Mossi population and the territory as a whole remains fetishistic.

781 Let us proceed to a description of Mossi religious customs. First, the funeral ceremonies.

● 755 When a Mossi is ill he summons a soothsayer (bara in Mossi). The latter takes some earth and looks at it to see what will happen to the sick man. Then he states either that the latter will get well, on condition of obliging with a sheep and a chicken, or else that he will die. In the first case the requested chicken and sheep are brought to the bara, and then, if the sick person gets well, he gets something else, a sheep or 5,000 cowries. If the sick person dies, contrary to prediction, the family merely says that the bara was a liar and nothing else happens.

764 If the deceased is a man, it is the family elders who care for him. They stretch his limbs and even his fingers so he will not turn rigid immediately, and they close his eyes. Then one of the elders washes the corpse with cold water in the presence of the whole family. After this, the elders sew a shroud with cotton bands to wrap around the deceased, and then he is rolled up in a mat.

The soukala chiefs (we know that among the Mossi every household head is the head of a soukala) are buried in the courtyard /586/ of their soukala, or else before its gate. The grave diggers are fetched, and they dig a hole the size of a man, lay the corpse at the bottom, and place boards above it to prevent the soil from weighing

789 If someone tells you that you own many animals, or that they are
791 very handsome, this gives bad luck, as you know. So, to ward it off,
777 /593/ you grasp your grigri by slipping two fingers into the iron hook and two others into the curve of the horn, and then you hang it in your hut, or better still, you hang it from the neck of one of the threatened animals.-

789 11. A small turtle completely enclosed in a small leather bag
791 along with a powdered aquatic leaf called kouri. If you have a
●755 stomach-ache, you cover the flat side of the object with butter and rub your stomach with it.

789 12. A small piece of wood covered with lizardskin in the middle
791 and leather at the ends and prolonged at one end by an iron tip.
832 If one wishes for the favors of a woman who refuses to grant them, one comes near the cruel woman while gripping the grigri in the left fist, its tip pointing up. At the same time, one presses the woman's hand tightly with the right hand. This method of seduction is claimed to be infallible.

789 13. A koba horn covered with leather and prolonged at the broad
791 end with a chicken foot. Inside, the horn contains rice, salt, and
754 soumbara. If you were threatened by a spell performed against you, you would slip the horn upon your head, with the thick end between the eyes and the pointed end behind the head. Then you would have nothing to fear.

14. A deer horn containing barkoundi leaves and closed with a lid adorned with a cowrie.

To prevent a sorcerer from eating the soul of a third party, you lift the lid with the aid of a knife covered with karité butter, you take with this knife a little of the contents of the horn, and you spread it on your forehead.

535 In addition to the bara and timisoba, the Mossi also have ouango.
532 "The ouango," says Marc (op. cit., pages 152 and 155), "are
575 dancers whose costume consists of a huge liana robe which covers the entire body and which is surmounted by a wooden mask painted red and black and usually representing /594/ the head of an animal. The ouango are members of a rather mysterious brotherhood. They have a special language, and the Mossi believe that anyone who says a word

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a [431] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,